



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 30, 2011

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COUNTY PROGRAM IS A BRIGHT IDEA *Neighborhoods for Kids Wins Harvard Recognition*

An innovative San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) program that strives to keep abused and neglected children in their own neighborhoods and schools is named a Bright Idea by Harvard University.

Neighborhoods for Kids—East County is one of 36 programs across the nation recognized by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

"We are thrilled that one of our programs is being recognized by such a prestigious institution," said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, County Board of Supervisors. "This is the result of the great collaboration that is taking place in East County and how communities are working together to minimize disruption in foster children's lives while family reunification efforts are in process."

Established in 2004, Neighborhood for Kids works with schools, foster parents, law enforcement, community organizations and faith-based groups to minimize the stress and disruption children often face when they cannot remain with their family.

"Government is struggling to deliver quality services with strapped resources and diminishing budgets," said Anthony Saich, director of the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. "These 36 government programs demonstrate that creative solutions to some of our nation's most intractable problems can be generated and succeed in even in the most challenging of environments."

More than half of the 350 children in East County who require out-of-home placement are placed with relatives or family friends. Of those not living with relatives, more than 70 percent are placed in East County foster homes. Furthermore, 67 percent of the school-aged children in out-of-home care stay in their school.

"The Neighborhoods for Kids program aims to strengthen families and ensure the health of our children which supports the County's new Live Well, San Diego! initiative," said Walt Ekard, Chief Administrative Officer, County of San Diego.

Neighborhoods for Kids is a partnership between schools and community groups working to align child welfare services within school boundaries. The program relies on a community-based approach and public-private partnerships to meet the needs of families in East County.

"It's extremely important for foster children to continue their normal routines and activities so that their mental and physical well-being is not greatly impacted," said Nick Macchione, HHSA Director. "Neighborhoods for Kids provides the stability these children need to stay healthy and feel safe."

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